
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 October 2016

by Rachel Walmsley BSc MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 17 November 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/M5450/D/16/3158457
12 St Austell Close, Edgware HA8 6BD

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr D Varsani against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Harrow.
 - The application Ref P/2035/16, dated 25 April 2016 was refused by notice dated 22 June 2016.
 - The development proposed is two storey side, part rear and single storey rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. This is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is at the end of a cul-de-sac to St Austell Close. St Austell Close is flanked on two sides by a terrace of properties and is terminated by two pairs of semi-detached houses. The semi-detached houses are set back from and at an angle to the cul-de-sac and between them there is a gap between buildings. This gap is an important visual feature within views from the opposite end of the close, looking towards the appeal site; it marks a clear separation between development on one side of the close and the other.
4. Policies 7.4B and 7.6B of the London Plan¹, Core Policy CS1(B) of the Core Strategy² and Policy DM1 of the Local Plan³ seek to ensure that development respects the character and appearance of the area, responds to the pattern of existing development and is well designed. The Council's SPD⁴ highlights the need for extensions to harmonise with the scale and architectural style of the original building and the character of the area. Whilst the guidance within the SPD is supplementary to the policies stated, it provides more detailed design guidance on residential development, including house extensions, and is before me for consideration.

¹ London Plan (adopted March 2015)

² Harrow Core Strategy (adopted February 2012)

³ Harrow Council, Development Management Policies (adopted July 2013)

⁴ Harrow Council, Residential Design Guide (Adopted 15 December 2010)

5. The development proposes a large extension to the existing property which would extend to the side and rear and would add substantially to the scale of the existing house. Consequently the development would be overly dominant in scale and therefore would be harmful to the form and scale of the host dwelling.
6. Furthermore, the width of the development, together with its proximity to the shared boundary with No 11 St Austell Close and its position on land higher than its surroundings would expose the development to local views. As a result the development would be visually prominent within the area and would fill in the gap that currently separates development on one side of the close from the other. As concluded by the Planning Inspector determining the appeal at No 11 St Austell Close, gaps are not defining features of the close overall. However, the gap identified between the appeal site and No 11 is important within views towards the appeal site. Enclosing this gap with development to the scale and proportions proposed would remove the visual break that currently separates development on one side of the close from the other. This in turn would reduce the sense of openness within the street, harmful to local views and to the character and appearance of the area overall.
7. In coming to this conclusion I have taken into consideration the existing extensions at No 9 and No 11 St Austell Close and No 11 in particular which was granted permission at appeal. However, No 11, as extended, is set a distance from the shared boundary and together with being on land lower than the appeal site, remains subservient to, and partly obscured from the street. Furthermore, the gap that the development occupies at No 11 has a less significant role in the character of the street than the gap between the appeal site and No 11. Consequently the development at No 11 cannot be compared fairly with that proposed.
8. The appeal property would be extended to the rear. The doubling of the width of the rear elevation, combined with the height of the two storey element would dominate the original house. This in turn would detract from the form and scale of the main dwelling and from its adjoining neighbour. I recognise that the rear of the site would not be in public view and therefore the harm to the character and appearance of the area would be limited. Nevertheless, the harm found to the form and scale of the host dwelling and its adjoining neighbour carries some weight given that this would be contrary to policies Policy DM1 of the Local Plan and the SPD in particular which seeks development that has regard to neighbouring buildings.
9. I appreciate that the development would result in improvements to family living space and current living conditions. However, I have not been convinced that a development of the size proposed is necessary to fulfil these requirements. As a result I find that the benefits identified would not overcome the harm found to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and surrounding area.
10. In all, therefore, for the reasons given I find that the development would be harmful to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and surrounding area and therefore would be contrary to Policies 7.4B and 7.6B of the London Plan, Core Policy CS1(B) of the Core Strategy, Policy DM1 of the Local Plan and the SPD.

Other matters

11. I recognise that aspects of the development would comply with the guidance set out within the SPD, not least the hipped roof and the set back of the development from the front wall of the host dwelling. However, this does not overcome the harm that I have found as a result of the scale, form and layout of the development and the associated conflict with policy. The National Planning Policy Framework states that development that does not accord with the development plan should be refused.
12. I note the appeal referenced by the Council⁵. Without drawings of the proposal I am unable to draw comparisons between this and the development proposed nor assess the implications of this decision for the current appeal. Notwithstanding this, each case must be assessed on its own merits and in doing so, I have found that the development proposed would be contrary to the development plan.

Conclusion

13. In light of the reasons above, I conclude that the development would be contrary to the development plan and therefore the appeal is dismissed.

R Walmsley

INSPECTOR

⁵ APP/M5450/D/15/3008863